

# **IN AND OUT OF HOSPITAL**

**A SENIOR'S GUIDE**

**FOR YOUR STAY IN HOSPITAL**

**AND RETURN HOME**



**The Council on Aging of Ottawa**

**1247 Kilborn Place, Suite 101  
Ottawa, ON K1H 6K9**

**May 2007**

# IMPORTANT NAMES AND NUMBERS

MY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

HOSPITAL: \_\_\_\_\_

FLOOR: \_\_\_\_\_ ROOM #: \_\_\_\_\_

ROOM PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

HOSPITAL STAFF DOCTOR'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY DOCTOR'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

CLINICAL MANAGER/NURSE'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL WORKER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRE (CCAC)  
CASE MANAGER'S NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

MY EMERGENCY CONTACT IS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank all those people who contributed to the development of this document with their comments and very solid experience as seniors, caregivers, and health care professionals.

In particular, we would like to thank the following people for their insights and expertise which were invaluable throughout the creation of 1<sup>st</sup> edition, “In and Out of Hospital”.

Louise Émond  
Danielle Perron  
Montfort Hospital

Karen Nelson  
Ottawa Hospital-Civic/General/Riverside Campus

Anne Brammer  
Bonnie Hall  
Queensway-Carleton Hospital

Dr. Stephanie Amos  
Dr. Bill Dalziel  
Cal Martell  
Regional Geriatric Assessment Program  
Ottawa Hospital-Civic Campus

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Older Women's Network

Jean McKibbon  
Ottawa-Carleton Health Department

Dianne Rossy  
Regional Geriatric Assessment Program  
Ottawa Hospital-Civic Campus

Al Goyette  
Rehabilitation Centre

Nancy Knudsen  
Sandy Hill Community Health Centre

Doris Pringle  
Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa-Carleton

June Joe  
Yet Keen Seniors' Day Centre

We also thank the following individuals for their expertise and review of this second edition.

Anne MacDonald  
Champlain Community Care Access Centre

Geoffrey Coombs  
Monica Cordeiro  
Dr. Kathryn Downer  
Health Issues Committee  
The Council on Aging of Ottawa

Andrew Lauzon  
Denise Paquette  
VON Eastern Counties Branch

# PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to prepare you for a stay in hospital and your return home. You and your caregivers (family members, friends) have the right to ask questions, to get answers, and to decide what is the best action to take for your health and well-being.

In this guide there are ideas that have helped seniors to get ready to go to the hospital and ideas that have helped them when they returned home. If you know:

- **that your stay in hospital may be short,**
- what to expect about your stay in the hospital,
- who can help you when you return home,
- what services are available to you at home,

then, when you leave the hospital, you may be better able to continue to look after yourself.

This guide contains information to help you prepare for a planned admission to the hospital. It will also help you if you are admitted through the Emergency Department.

Throughout the guide there are questions that you may want to ask. You can write your answers to the questions on these pages.

- You can write your own questions where there is a space.
- You can fill in the checklists.
- At the end of the guide there is a Page for Notes.

# BEFORE YOU GO TO THE HOSPITAL

## What to Ask/Tell your Doctor

It is important that you understand your condition and every procedure that is recommended. You have a right to ask questions so that you are able to make the best decisions about your health care. You have a right to say “yes” or “no” to the treatment that is offered to you. Talk with your nurse and doctor about the information that you want shared. Below are some examples of questions that you may want to ask.

### Before agreeing to a treatment, ask:

1. Why do I need it?

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2. How will I feel after this treatment?

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3. What are the possible complications with this treatment?

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4. What are the possible side effects of the medications?

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5. What will happen if I don't have this treatment, or if I delay in making a decision?

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6. If I don't want this treatment, what other tests or treatments could be done?

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7. How long should I expect to be in the hospital?

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8. What will I be able, or not able to do, when I return home?  
What activities will I need help with at home?

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9. How long will I need this help?

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10. What services are available to me at home?

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11. How can these services be set up for my return home?

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12. What are the dates and times of any follow-up appointments?

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13. Will I require modifications to my home upon my return?  
If so, what are the costs and who will pay?

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## **TELL YOUR DOCTOR OR THE ADMITTING STAFF WHETHER:**

- **you live alone,**
- **you have relatives or friends who can help you,**
- **you have neighbours who can help you,**
- **you have any memory concerns.**

## **What to Do Before You Go to the Hospital**

### **Legal Affairs**

#### **Powers of Attorney**

- The new law “Substitute Decisions Act” says that you can choose someone in advance to make decisions for you, if you become mentally incapable of making these decisions yourself.
- You indicate that you have chosen someone by filling out a form and writing down clear instructions about your wishes
- A Power of Attorney is a legal document that gives someone else the power to act on your behalf.
- There are two types of Power of Attorney.

#### **Power of Attorney for Property**

- You may give a Power of Attorney for Property which means someone will act on your behalf to manage your property.
- This person is called your “attorney” though he or she need not be a lawyer.

- “Property” includes:
  - your money
  - your home (if you own one)
  - anything else you own.

## **Power of Attorney for Personal Care**

- You may also give someone Power of Attorney for your Personal Care. This person is called your substitute decision maker, or “attorney”, though he or she need not be a lawyer.
- With this legal document you give someone the power to make personal care decisions on your behalf, if you become mentally incapable of making these decisions yourself. Personal care decisions are about you:
  - health care (including medical treatment)
  - health care wishes in certain situations ie. need for resuscitation, need for ventilation
  - diet, personal grooming, and clothing
  - housing
  - safety.
- Powers of Attorney deserve careful consideration. It is helpful if you discuss your wishes with your family, friends, physician, and lawyer before you complete the forms.
- Powers of Attorney can be revoked in writing; however, you must be mentally capable at the time of writing for the revocation to be valid.

## **Insurance**

- There are three types of rooms in the hospital. According to your insurance coverage, you may request a standard ward room containing three or four beds, a semi-private room with two beds, or a private room.

- The complete cost of a standard ward room is covered by your provincial health plan.
- When you are admitted, the staff of the Admitting Department will review with you the costs of the semi-private and private rooms.
- These costs may be covered, in part or full, by extra health insurance that you may have. Find out before going to the hospital what your insurance covers.
- Your insurance may also cover the costs of equipment that you may need when you return home.
- Remember to bring your insurance documents with you to the hospital.

**MAKE SURE YOU HAVE YOUR PROVINCIAL HEALTH CARD AND OTHER INSURANCE CARDS.**

**Medications**

- Make a list of your drug allergies.
- Pack your prescribed, over-the-counter and herbal medications (in their original bottles) to bring to the hospital.
- When you go to the hospital:
  - show all your medications to your nurse.
  - do not take (swallow) your own medications, unless the doctor or nurse tells you to do so.

## What to Do at Home

1.  Learn about your condition.
2.  Tell your family and close friends that you are going to be in the hospital. Tell them where important papers are.
3.  Ask one family member or friend to be your main contact person before, during, and after your hospital stay.
4.  Attend to giving Power of Attorney for Property and/or Personal Care to a family member, or someone you trust.
5.  Pack your personal telephone book and a calendar/diary for future appointments.
6.  Ask a family member, or someone you trust, to help you with home security, mail, bills, and plant or pet care, while you are in the hospital.
7.  Write yourself reminders for when you return home. After your stay in hospital, you may feel more tired, you may experience confusion, or your memory may change due to your illness.
8.  Put the telephone, your doctor's number, and any other important numbers in a place that is easy to reach.
9.  Place your health supplies and cooking utensils within easy reach at home.
10.  Prepare meals in advance if you choose not to have community services.

- 11.☐ Arrange for automatic deposit for cheques and automatic payments for utility bills and other appropriate payments.
- 12.☐ Prepare your discharge plan.
- 13.☐ Arrange home support programs when necessary prior to admission: ie. Meals on Wheels, home assistance.

### **What Your Family/Friends Can Do**

- Go with you to the doctor.
- Write down key points about:
  - your condition
  - your treatment
  - your expected length of time in the hospital
  - your expected state of health after the treatment.
- Act as Power of Attorney if designated, when required.
- Collect your mail, pay your bills, look after pets or plants.
- Get a copy of the hospital handbook which has general information about topics such as visiting hours and parking
- Make requests of the health care team and talk with your family members for you (with your permission).
- Arrange a phone and/or television for you. (\$ involved)
- Pick up items you may want from home or the store.
- Go with you to and from the hospital.

- Stay or visit with you in the hospital.
- Act as interpreter, or arrange interpretation, for you.
- Stay with you upon your return home.

## **What to Bring to the Hospital**

### **\* Ontario Health Card and insurance cards**

*\* Please mark all items with your name.*

1. Toiletries including:
  - shampoo, soap, and body lotion
  - make-up/shaving equipment
  - brush/comb
  - toothpaste and toothbrush.
2. Clothing including:
  - loose fitting pyjamas/night gown/housecoat
  - street clothes
  - non-slip slippers/footwear.
3. Personal items such as:
  - hearing aid, batteries, case, cleaning supplies
  - ear plugs
  - dentures, denture cup
  - eyeglasses, eyeglass case
  - prostheses
  - continence supplies
  - ostomy supplies
  - cane, walker, wheelchair.
4. Prescribed and herbal medications, allergy list.

5. Books, magazines, notebook, pen, pencil.
6. A tape player and/or battery radio with earphones.
7. A small amount of cash.

**\* Put your wallet, credit cards, and jewellery in a safe place. Leave your cell phone at home.**

## **WHEN YOU ARE IN THE HOSPITAL**

### **Rights**

As a patient you have the right:

- to all the information that you need to make the best health care choices.
- to ask questions and to receive answers which help you to understand your condition, your treatment, and hospital routines.
- to express your concerns and to change your mind.
- to say “yes” or “no” to a treatment.
- to ask for copies of any form that you have signed.
- to be treated in a manner that respects your needs and cultural preferences.

### **Responsibilities**

As a patient you have the responsibility:

- to tell your family and friends about your condition.
- to take part in the planning and delivery of your health care.
- to make informed decisions about your health care.
- to accept what happens based on the decisions that you make.

- to tell your family physician about your condition and your concerns.
- to collect all the information that you need to know so that you can plan for your return home.
- to remain as independent as possible.

## **Discharge Planning**

Discharge Planning is:

- the development of a plan to coordinate all the activities related to your admission and discharge from the hospital.

**The most important people who do discharge planning are:**

- you, your family and/or friends
- members of the health care team.

**Your stay in the hospital will likely be short.** This means:

- you will spend more of your recovery time at home.
- that in addition to help from your family and/or friends, you may need other services which will help you to recover at home.
- you will have to talk to your family and/or friends to see how they can help you at home. You cannot commit family members or friends to your care without their permission.
- you will have to tell the health care team members how much help you will need at home so that they can arrange services for you.
- you should ask if there are fees and how much they are for some of the services.
- these services, which are provided by community agencies, may be set up as part of your discharge plan.

The hospital does have a Discharge Planning Policy. If you are worried and have questions about discharge, speak to your RN/social worker about your concerns.

## **Your Health Care Team Members**

**Your health care team includes those members who can best meet your health care needs. You will not see each member of your health care team every day.**

### Physician

Assesses medical and surgical problems and directs your treatment plan.

### Registered Nurse

Gives you care and coordinates and implements your **Care Plan. A Care Plan is an outline of what your health care team will do to help you to improve your health condition.** Other health care workers will help the registered nurse with your care.

### Specialized Geriatric Services

This is usually a consultation team including nursing and physicians who can assist in suggestions for care, diagnosis and discharge planning. Available in most hospitals.

### Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) Case Manager

Assesses your eligibility for Home Care and helps to plan for the health care and the community supports you will need at home.

### Discharge Planner/Social Worker

Assesses your family and community support networks. He/she works with other health care team members to help you and your family adjust to any changes resulting from your illness. He/she plans for your discharge from hospital.

### Occupational Therapist

Reviews your care plan and assists you to be as independent as possible in your activities of daily living (eating, bathing, toileting, dressing, grooming).

### Physiotherapist

Assesses your mobility and strength and works with you to improve your mobility and strength.

### Recreation Therapist

Assesses your lifestyle and develops an activity plan to meet your needs (physical, social, intellectual, and solitary).

### Dietitian

Assesses your eating habits and will help you to plan nutritious meals.

### Pharmacist

Assesses your medications and provides information about the medications you are taking and the medications which are prescribed for you.

### Speech and Language Pathologist

Assesses your speech, hearing and/or swallowing abilities and helps you to improve these abilities.

### Psychologist

Helps you to adjust to the physical, mental, and emotional effects of your condition.

### Pastoral/Spiritual Care

Discusses your spiritual needs with you and helps to meet your spiritual needs.

## What to Expect During Your Stay in Hospital

As you cope with your hospital stay, you may feel more tired than usual. This is to be expected.

### What to Ask

1. What is the expected day/date of my discharge?
2. What will I be able to do when I go home?
3. What will I need help with when I go home?
4. For how long will I need this help?
5. What equipment will I need when I go home?
6. Ask the health care team member (social worker) to write down the following information for you when you are discharged:
  - names of the service agencies
  - what services these agencies provide
  - when the service will start
  - fees for the service
  - name and phone number of a contact person for each agency.
7. Ask the nurse to write down the following information for you when you are discharged:
  - name and phone number of someone to contact at the hospital
  - a list of your medications, dosages, and side effects
  - any follow-up appointments that have been made for you.

8. Can you explain the medical terms?
9. Can information be explained in a way that I understand?

### **What To Do If ...**

1. You are having problems with the hospital staff, have spoken to the hospital staff, and the problem still exists...

**You may ask to speak with a Clinical Services Manager who will listen to your problem and will try to fix the problem.**

2. The doctor and/or medical students (qualified doctors) come to see you and you would prefer to talk with just the doctor...

**You can talk to the doctor about how you feel.**

3. You find that it is just too noisy, or, for some other reason the room is not suitable for you...

**You can explain the situation to a nurse and ask if a room change can be made.**

4. You have been in the hospital for some time and you learn that you are going to have to stay longer....you may want to ask for a family meeting to review your care plan.

**You or a family member should:**

- **find out if there is an extra cost for your room.**
- **find out the amount of the extra cost.**
- **decide if you need to change rooms.**

# WHEN YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL

**When the doctor signs the orders, you will be discharged. Most hospitals discharge patients by 10:00 a.m.**

## What to Bring Home

1.  Collect all your personal items.
2.  Get a list of your medications, their side effects, and dosages.
3.  Get a list of follow-up appointments.
4.  Get the name and phone number of someone to call at the hospital in case you have questions.
5.  Check with the nurse, social worker, or CCAC Case Manager to ensure that the services you need at home have been arranged.
6.  Make sure you have a list of phone numbers or the agencies that will be providing the services that have been arranged for you.
7.  Make arrangements for your transportation home or have the nurse or social worker make these arrangements for you.
8.  Arrange for someone to be with you on your way home.
9.  Arrange for someone to be with you for the first 24 to 48 hours after your stay in hospital. If you feel unsettled at night, arrange for someone to stay with you.



## Ottawa Area Community Resources to Help You at Home

### Books

#### **Directory of Resources for Senior Citizens of Ottawa-Carleton. (This is a yearly publication).**

Available at minimal cost:

The Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa

Telephone: **613-234-8044.**

#### **Community Resource Guide for Caregivers of Older Adults.**

Available free at:

Ottawa Public Health

Telephone: **613-580-6744.**

### Services

If you need help with health care contact: **The Champlain Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) at 613-745-5525**

<http://www.champlainhln.on.ca/> .

- The CCAC coordinates in-home services, such as nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy and personal support, for people who are recovering from illness or injury, and for those who are living with chronic illness or disability.
- An individual or family member can self refer for services; however, a doctor's referral is required in order to receive nursing services.
- An assessment is done by a CCAC Case Manager to determine eligibility for the services.
- Services are provided for a specified time period. At the end of this period an assessment is done to determine if the time period will be extended.

- If you are eligible for services, there is no fee.
- If you are having difficulty managing at home, Case Managers can also help you consider other housing options and coordinate admissions to respite services or long-term care homes.

If you need help with food preparation and/or housekeeping and/or looking after your home contact:

**Senior Citizens Council at 613-234-8044**

<http://www.seniorcouncil.org/> .

- You may be referred to Home Support Service Agencies which help seniors to remain living independently in their homes.
- Each agency provides a variety of services such as: Home Help, Home Maintenance, Homemaking, Meals on Wheels, and Transportation service to medical appointments.
- A fee is charged for some of the services.

If you need assistance with transportation contact:

**Para Transpo at 613-244-1289**

[http://www.octranspo.com/new\\_menuue.htm](http://www.octranspo.com/new_menuue.htm) .

- Para Transpo is a door-to-door service for people who, for physical reasons, are unable to walk to the bus stop or to board a bus.
- You can register by having an application form signed by a member of your health care team (physician, physiotherapist, or occupational therapist). The social worker can help you to complete the form.

- Service is available to registered clients seven days a week from 6:30 a.m. to 12:00 midnight.
- There is a fee for this service; however, there is a special rate for seniors.

## **Hospitals in Ottawa**

### **Acute Care Hospitals**

Montfort Hospital 613-746-4621  
<http://www.hopitalmontfort.com/>

The Ottawa Hospital (three sites): 613-722-7000  
<http://www.ottawahospital.on.ca/>

- Civic Campus
- General Campus
- Riverside Campus

Ottawa Hospital Rehabilitation Centre 613-737-7350

Queensway-Carleton Hospital 613-721-2000  
<http://www.qch.on.ca/>

### **Other Hospitals**

Royal Ottawa Health Care Group:  
<http://www.rohcg.on.ca/>

- Royal Ottawa Hospital 613-722-6521

SCO Health Service (two sites):  
<http://www.scohs.on.ca/bins/index.asp>

- Elisabeth Bruyère Health Centre 613-562-0050
- Saint Vincent Hospital 613-233-4041

### **Specialized Geriatric Services**

- Regional Geriatric Program 613-761-4458  
<http://www.rgpeo.com/>

## REFERENCES

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### **Copies of "In and Out of Hospital" are available at:**

The Council on Aging of Ottawa:

Tel.: 613-789-3577 x0, Fax: 613-789-4406,

Email: [coa@coaottawa.ca](mailto:coa@coaottawa.ca). Web Site: [www.coaottawa.ca](http://www.coaottawa.ca)

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ISBN: 1-895 495-19-9**